

LEASING OF RESTRICTED INDIAN ALLOTMENTS NOT OVER 10 YEARS

FEBRUARY 12, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, from the Committee on Indian
Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 10983]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 10983) providing for the leasing of restricted Indian allotments for a period not exceeding 10 years, having considered the same, report thereon with a recommendation that it do pass.

The leasing of restricted Indian allotment lands for farming and grazing purposes is now limited as to time to a period of five years by the act of June 25, 1910. Experience has shown that it is practically impossible to induce white settlers to lease these lands for so short a period as five years. It is believed that if the time limit is extended for a period not to exceed 10 years that Indians will be able to lease certain of their trust patent lands for agricultural purposes on a share basis. This will not only result in the cultivation and improvement of much land now idle, but will furnish a means of livelihood for the Indian owners. What is even more important is the placing of actual farmers among the Indians.

This will tend to stimulate interest in agriculture on the part of the Indians themselves and be a means of getting the younger members of the various tribes affected to cultivate their own lands.

The bill has the approval of the Secretary of the Interior and his letter is submitted for the information of the House:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, February 10, 1925.

Hon. HOMER P. SNYDER,
House of Representatives.

MY DEAR MR. SNYDER: This will refer further to your letter of February 3, transmitting, for report and recommendation, a copy of H. R. 10983, providing for the lease of restricted Indian allotments for a period of not to exceed 10 years.

The maximum period for which nonirrigable allotted Indian land may be leased for farming and grazing purposes is five years, as provided by the act of June 25, 1910 (34 Stat. L. 686). Experience has demonstrated that in many cases a five-year term is not long enough to obtain satisfactory tenants. There is considerable allotted Indian land on many of the reservations beyond that which the Indians themselves can cultivate to advantage, which should be leased in order not only to bring in some revenue therefrom for the allottee, but also to have the land subjugated and placed in a state of cultivation so that the owner may take it over upon the expiration of the lease and continue its use for farming purposes.

Much of this land is raw, rough, and unbroken prairie, requiring considerable expense, labor, and time to subjugate, prepare for cultivation, and make productive. In some cases the lessee makes no profit during the first few years, all his income from crops being absorbed by the expense of subjugation and cultivation.

It is the policy to require that the tenant place certain improvements on the land as part of the consideration, to become the property of the allottee upon the expiration of the lease. With a term as short as five years a lessee will not place upon the land as valuable improvements as he would if he had a longer term.

It is believed that if the period is extended to 10 years, as contemplated by the bill, a considerable acreage of now idle Indian land can be placed in cultivation by means of leases, with resultant benefit to the allottee in each case.

The bill is identical with the latest law on the subject of Indian leases, the act of March 3, 1924 (41 Stat. L. 1232), except the addition of the words "for a term not to exceed 10 years" in line 5.

For the reasons set forth above, it is recommended that H. R. 10983 be enacted into law.

Very truly yours,

HUBERT WORK.

